



**Committee on Finance
and the Northampton City Council**

*Councilor David A. Murphy, Chair
Councilor Maureen T. Carney
Councilor Marianne L. LaBarge
(Vacant)*

**City Council Chambers, 212 Main Street
Wallace J. Puchalski Municipal Building
Northampton, MA**

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: September 1, 2016

The Finance Committee meeting takes place as announced during the City Council Meeting which begins at 7:05 p.m.

1. Meeting Called To Order: At 8:36 p.m. councilor Murphy called the meeting to order.
2. Roll Call: On a roll call the following committee members were present: Councilors Murphy, Carney and LaBarge. Also present from the City Council were the following Councilors: Dwight, O'Donnell, Bidwell, and Klein.
3. Approval Of Minutes From The Previous Meeting: Councilor LaBarge moved to approve the minutes of August 18, 2016; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.
4. Independent Audit For FY2016 - Contract Award Announcement Made
Councilor Murphy announced the following: In accordance with Northampton City Charter Finance and Fiscal Procedures Section 7-6, the Northampton City Council is announcing that the award of a contract for an outside audit of the FY2016 books and accounts of the City has been awarded to Thomas J. Scanlon & Associates, Certified Public Accountants of 8 Tina Drive, South Deerfield, MA.
5. Financial Orders
 - A. 16.149 An Order To Authorize Payment For A Previous Year Bill For The DPW

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz explained that the bill represented in this order was from FY2015. The bill was originally paid, but it was credited to the wrong account. The payment was refunded and now needs to be re-paid. Paying from a different fiscal year from which the bill was incurred requires City Council approval.

16.150 An Order To Appropriate \$17,045 For Stair Repair At The Academy Of Music

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Mayor Narkewicz showed pictures of the stairs; when the stairs are wet or icy they become a hazard. Preferably the stairs will be done before winter. The City is still waiting for a third quote; the amount in the order represents one of the quotes.

C. 16.151 An Order To Appropriate \$41,137 For Replacement Of 1986 Six-Wheel Sander For DPW

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that estimates are often used when planning capital projects. In this particular case, the quote came in higher than was planned. Additional funds are requested from Capital Stabilization to complete the purchase.

D. 16.152 An Order To Rescind Borrowing Authority For Various Projects

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that the projects included in this order were paid for from various grants (two different grant programs). However, the City was required during the application process to attest that it supports the project. Typically what is done is that the City will get a borrowing authorization for the full amount and then will rescind the borrowing authority once the grant is received. The borrowing authorization counts against the City's credit, so it makes sense to rescind the borrowing authority.

E. 16.153 An Order To Rescind Borrowing Authority For Various Projects

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that Bond Counsel does not like to have exact numbers, but rather amounts that are rounded to the nearest \$1,000. Councilor Klein asked whether the City now had enough borrowing power if

the rounding down; the Mayor indicated that it would not be a problem for the City to come up with the \$500; rounding up would also require City Council approval.

F. 16.155 An Order To Appropriate \$60,000 To Demolish Or Make safe A Fire Damaged Structure At 49 Round Hill Road

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that this is a fund that the City does not appropriate money into as part of the budget. Money will be transferred into the account only when the Building Commissioner requests. Often the funds are not used (as in the case of when funds were added to demolish the former Honda dealership on King Street).

Building Commissioner Louis Hasbrouck was present to explain the need for this order. Councilor LaBarge motioned to recognize the Commissioner; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Commissioner Hasbrouck explained that there was a fire at 49 Round Hill Road. The severely damaged building is known as "Rogers Hall". The Commissioner ordered that the building be "made safe". There has been a lot of conversation, but the actual work has not happened yet. In order to make sure that it happens, the Commissioner is asking for \$60,000 to demolish the building if necessary. He is not in favor of the City demolishing the building, however, if it does, he will need the funding. The City will be able to recoup the funds. Round Hill Road has been closed from below the project to above the project.

Councilor LaBarge asked if the City will put a lien on the property to recoup the money. Commissioner Hasbrouck said that this would happen and there are two separate provisions to lien the property. The City will have a priority lien.

Councilor Bidwell noted that this was a shocking fire to a historic building. The recent development on the property has been much anticipated. The residents in the community have been very appreciative of the response of the police, fire, building commissioner, and DPW during this time period. Some residents are aggrieved and inconvenienced because the road is not open yet. Councilor Bidwell noted that public safety issues have to trump all other concerns and he is satisfied about the response level to the issues that have been raised. He understands the need to have the funds appropriated.

Councilor Dwight asked if the owners act quicker to take necessary action, does that mean that the road will open up at that point. Commissioner Hasbrouck explained that the road will open if the necessary actions are taken to secure the building. He had previously ordered that the building be made secure enough to allow the road to be opened again. He noted that it is conceivable that the façade could collapse into the street, although this is highly unlikely. The initial engineer's report that was drafted after the fire showed that it likely would not collapse; however, the Commissioner is not willing to take any chances. Councilor Dwight noted that procedurally there is a request for two readings and wondered if this request was made in order to expedite the process. The Mayor stated that City Council will not meet again for

another two weeks and that he would like to have the funds available so that the Building Commissioner could take immediate action, if necessary.

Councilor LaBarge thanked the Building, Fire, and Police Department for their response.

Councilor Murphy noted that the loss is particularly hard for the alumni of the Clarke School for the Deaf. He recalls working in the building while in college; he is sad to see such a loss.

Mayor Narkewicz expressed his thanks to the Dispatch Center for their role in the process. The nine-town response was coordinated by them. Commissioner Hasbrouck noted that an estimated 3 million gallons of water was used to put the fire out. Each of the ladders is capable of 1,000 per minute; there were two ladders running steadily on the fire.

G. 16.156 An Order To Accept A Gift Of Crosswalk Equipment From Northampton Montessori School

Councilor LaBarge moved to return the order back to the full City Council with a positive recommendation; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

The Mayor explained that the order is in conjunction with the new Montessori school building that is going up; the school was required as a condition of their permit to make some improvements to pedestrian traffic, including crosswalk improvements. The City will be accepting the equipment that the school will be donating. The equipment will include cross-walk signs that are push-button activated.

Councilor LaBarge asked about the price of the equipment and the Mayor stated that the estimate is about \$12,000. The equipment is not actually procured yet, but is comparable to what is already in place on North Street. The sign will alert traffic when there is someone in the crosswalk when a push-button is pressed. It will mostly be used for school-time traffic when going from one building to another. There will also be improvements to the sidewalk.

6. New Business: None

7. Adjourn: At 9:00 p.m. Councilor LaBarge moved to adjourn the meeting; Councilor Carney seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote of 3 Yes, 0 No, 1 Vacant.

Prepared by:

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